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Latest trends in environmental advertising design “application study of Egyptian society”

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Abstract

Currently, the power of environmental trends extends to Africa region, where environmental threats establish controversy to local governments and citizens. Like many African countries, Egypt suffers from hazardous air pollution, poor water quality and high intensity of traffic noise. The government and citizens of Egypt have started to realize the gravity of the environmental hazards. The research aims to put forward the concept of environmental advertising design through a gateway to experience visions of a new trends based on awareness of environmental aspects. Therefore, the research is interested in confirming the role of the new trends to international environmental advertising design in the development of awareness of the novelty of the Egyptian advertising designer. The research presents the international new trends of advertising design (Green Advertising, "Go Green", Think Sustainability and Greenwashing Advertising). © 2012 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

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1. Introduction

Advertising media plays an important role for advertisers in fields of product sales and marketing. Different media will create different marketing and communication results for consumers. In general, there are five major categories of advertising media: magazine/ newspaper, TV, radio broadcast, Internet, and mobile communications.

The environmental crisis is arguably one of the greatest challenges facing humanity in this century. Change in climate, the loss of biodiversity, environmental deterioration, emergencies produced by natural disasters, and shortage of water, among other problems, are a daily pollutants changing the existing patterns of life and compromising the expectations of future generations (Nelleman and Corcoran, 2010).

With a higher consumer awareness of environmental issues, firms obviously adopted strategies of “Green” (Ginsberg and Bloom, 2004), and start presenting environmental claims in their advertising campaigns with a desire of gaining an edge over their competitors.

Connolly and Prothero (2003) assert that a well implemented green positioning strategy can deliver such edge by producing a more favorable perception of the brand.

The power of environmental trends extends currently to Africa Region, where environmental threats establish controversy to local governments and citizens. Like many African countries, Egypt suffers from hazardous air

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pollution, poor water quality and high intensity traffic noise. The government and citizens of Egypt have started to realize the gravity of the environmental hazards.

The research focuses on improving the availability and relevance of environmental culture content for design aspects, and use of life-long learning, in advertising field through latest trends in environmental advertising.

2. Latest Trends in Environmental Advertising

2.1. Green Advertising (Go Green)

In 2010 Report on environmental claims made in North American market, researchers' concluded that "Green" is "a difficult word". It's evocative and powerful. Consumers and companies alike are attracted to it. But this is vague, and can mean something different to everyone that uses or hears it...We simply mean "products that claim to offer an environmental benefit". (TerraChoice 2010).

Environmental advertising, or green advertising, grew out of the importance to reach environmental consumers with information on pro-environmental aspects of a business' products and services (Banerjee, Gulas, and Iyer, 1995). Zinkhan and Carlson (pg. 1, 1995) defined green advertising as "promotional messages that may appeal to the needs and desires of environmentally concerned consumers." Consumers desire products enjoying environmental benefits and, advertising is becoming more prominent to organizations striving to communicate environmental information.

Greenadvertising is defined as any advertisement that meets one or more of the following criteria: Cox MJ (2008)

1. Explicitly or implicitly addresses the relationship between a product/service and the biophysical environment.
2. Promotes a green lifestyle with or without highlighting a product/service.
3. Presents a corporate image of environmental responsibility.

The green movement has so much momentum that the term "going green" had 15.6 million hits on Google in January 2008 (Erdman, 2008) and 31 million hits just over two months later. Marketing practitioners and academics attempt to identify and understand green consumers and their needs, and to develop market offerings that meet these needs (D'Souza et al, 2007).

Previous research into consumer attitudes toward green advertising was very comprehensive and addressed some of the same concepts we look for today. Due to previous research, we used themes that were unique to greenadvertising. For example, several authors noted motivations for a firm to produce green advertising (Davis, 1992; Frankel, 1992; Gillespie, 1992; Ottman, 1992, 1998, Zinkhan and Carlson, 1995). Others searched consumer responses to green advertising and products in terms of loyalty (Frankel, 1992), "Green advertising strengthens company image". Based on the research conducted by Chan (2001), And "I plan to switch to products and services that were advertised as being green". Diana L. Haytko and Erika Matulich (2009) prove that consumers who are more proactive with their environmental behaviors also have better attitudes toward green advertising. The results imply that green advertising may be best at reaching those who already practice green behaviors.

The results of the Study of Hartmann et al. (2005) that explored the effects of green branding on consumer attitudes suggest that a well-implemented green positioning strategy can lead to a more favorable perception of the brand. The study found that since consumers use both cognitive and emotional processes to select brands, it is better to give detailed information about a product's green or sustainable attributes while simultaneously appealing to emotional benefits of purchasing and using the product. The authors also emphasized the following: "There should be no doubt that a green brand positioning strategy unsupported by relevant environmentally sound product attributes will face short of success" (Hartmann et al 2005).

Peattie and Crane also caution green marketers: "Marketing philosophy and process are established on the customer and the relationship between the company and the customer. If this is characterised [sic] by cynicism and distrust, then companies are unlikely to be able to involve customers together with them through the changes needed to move towards sustainability. Green marketing will not work in the face of consumer distrust, but then that distrust may be partly a product of the types of 'green markets' that companies have relied upon so far; (Peattie and Crane 2005).

2.2. *ThinkSustainability*

The World Commission on Environment and Development has set forth a definition to "Sustainability" as "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This definition of sustainability does not specify the ethical roles of humans for their everlasting existence on the planet. The main issue was "how development could be environmentally realized".

Uncertainty about certain threats may be caused by the current environment-consuming development may, to some extent, create a hesitation to make fundamental change. Arguments about natural feedbacks that can reverse the damage to the environment are scientifically unproven and do ignore the overwhelming magnitude of possible threat. Arguments against the necessity of sustainability claim that prediction and extrapolations are always way off. The only thing we definitely know about future is that it is likely to be different from what we think it will be. Who could predict the computer revolution? Our greatest resource is the human mind, and potentials of innovation are unlimited (Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees, 1996). However, following the rationale of ignoring the threat relying on unproven theories or over-confidence in future revolutionary advances in technology does qualify as a gamble on the future of mankind. Change requires time. Adversely, mankind may not have time. A responsible response, by the stakeholders, would be to implement a strategy that helps in achieving a smooth shift from current conventional development patterns to sustainable development. Business-as-usual is not optional. A shift in the market trends is inevitable.

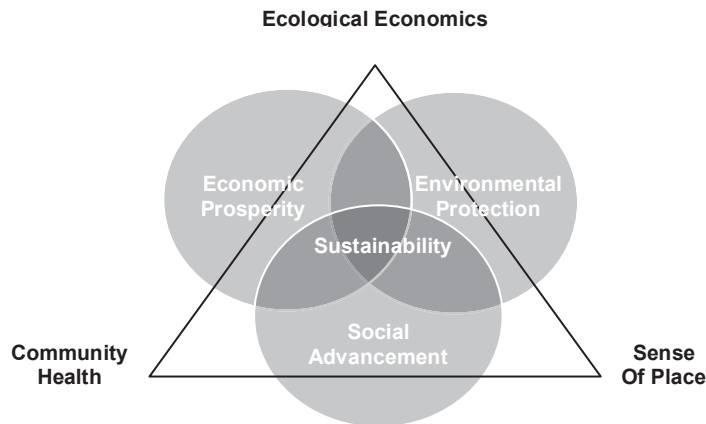


Fig. 1. Integrated Environmental, Social, and Economic Dimensions of Sustainability. (SGWA, 2003)

Today, terms like "Green" and "Greener" have become buzzwords of choice to describe all things sustainable and environmentally friendly. While they are often used interchangeably, each term actually means something different. In terms of their critical essay, *Green Versus Sustainability: From Semantics to Enlightenment*, Yanarella, Levine and Lancaster explain that "Green" refers to individual products and processes, whereas "sustainable" is related to whole systems of which individual consumer products and other commercial materials are a part. "Green" also tends to focus on a single attribute of a product, rather than addressing the overall system in which a product is designed, constructed, purchased, used, or discarded. "Sustainable" encompasses the entire system from design through disposal. According to the authors, "Green evokes small incremental improvements in social practices, modern technology, and human habitats, while sustainability implies a revolution in organizing our personal and collective lives and inhabiting the planet" (Yanarella et al 2009).

2.3. *Greenwashing Advertising: Pre-Dates the Modern Environmental Movement*

In 1962, several major resource companies, including Georgia Pacific, Wyerhaeuser and Sinclair Oil ran advertising campaigns that variously promoted their issue with the natural environment. The forestry companies

individually and collectively claim to be caring stewards of America's forests. Almost every advertisement developed by a forestry company during that year asserts that trees are a renewable resource and that the forestry industry is working to ensure such matter. The major theme in these early advertisements is that they were planting many trees more than they were harvesting. Georgia Pacific, for example, claims "a sustained, and perpetual harvest of fine timber". Wyrhaeuser states that "We must manage our forests to assure a continuous, never-ending supply of wood". (Eric Jenner,2005)

Greenwashing is not a recent phenomenon; since mid1980s, the term has gained broad recognition and acceptance to describe the practice of making unwarranted or overblown claims of sustainability or environmental friendliness in an attempt to gain market share. (Richard Dahl,2010)

Greenwashing Advertisements is a sort of advertising that energy companies are currently produces. ChevronTexaco, for instance, ran an advertisement in 2004 which pictured a boy, in waist-high green grass looking up at the clouds in a bright blue sky. The advertisement claims that Chevron Texaco works towards cleaner energy. Exxon Mobil tackled a similar approach, but instead of a blue sky and a young boy, it evokes ecological concerns using a picture of the earth from space. The company claims that they reduce emissions, but the strength of its greenwashing power found its rhetorical identification with public ecological concerns. The iconic power of the photograph of the earth from space contributes to the punch of the advertising copy: "What drives us to lead our industry in research, to reduce emissions by increasing efficiency, and to help hundreds of communities grow? ... We are all involved in this together".(Eric Jenner,2005)

Jennifer Boulden, senior Vice President of Ideal Bite, stated, at Advertising Age's 2008 Green Conference, "68% of consumers believe that companies are greenwashing or overstating their green claims"(Zmuda and Parekh, 2008, pg. 14). A loss of trust in all green advertising and to the advertising industry as a whole results when consumers perceive green advertising to be largely greenwashing (Wheaton, 2008).

3. Application Study of The Egyptian Society

The growing demands of society for greener products and Egyptian corporate desires to meet this and to make a profit seeks to a fascinating interaction with cultural change. Advertising affects the culture of the community through mutual interaction between the needs of consumers and their preferences and desires, as well as culture conveyed by the advertising. When the advertising responds to the requests of the community, it will be able to continue to deliver the message and advertising in a manner compatible with community members, because the environmental requirements have become an urgent necessity with the growing environmental trends. Accordingly, Egyptian designer must develops mental and intellectual abilities to achieve the environmental requirements that the consumer needs.

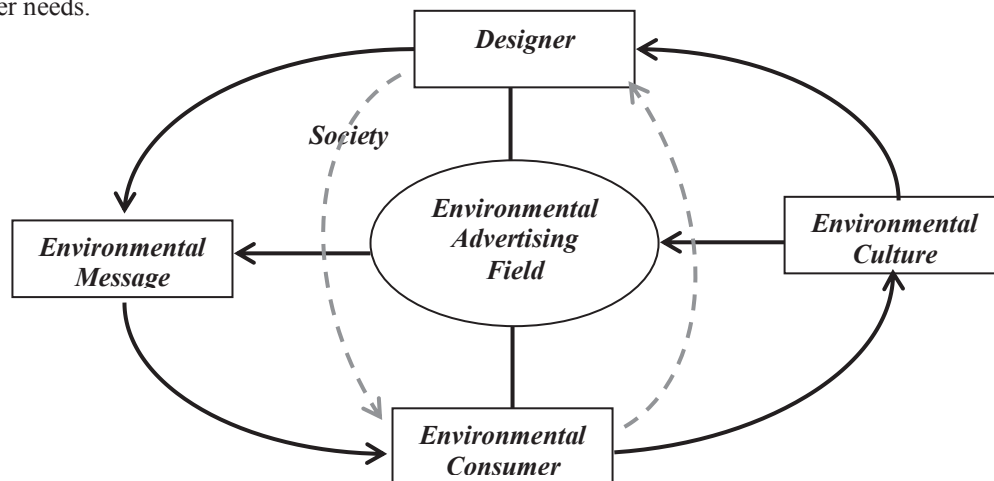


Fig. 2. The Relationship between Factors Affected in Environmental Advertising Field

Figure 2 shows the relationship between factors affected in environmental advertising field.

3.1. *Environmental Message*

Lord et al. (1995) reported that message agreement strongly influences advertisement attitude. This finding was corroborated by Lacznia et al. (1999), who studied the influence of advertising message involvement, product involvement, and product knowledge on the way a consumer processes an advertisement.

As a result, environmental advertising message involvement had the strongest influence on advertisement processing through achieving consumers' environmental needs .

3.2. *Environmental Culture*

Culture is defined as “The set of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs” (UNESCO,2002). The area of culture has grown in salience in global development issues on account of the rising share of cultural goods, services and intellectual property in world trade, as well as the threats to cultural diversities and identities associated with contemporary globalization. Moreover, there is increasing awareness that the protection and promotion of cultural diversity is vital to universal human rights, fundamental freedoms along with securing ecological and genetic diversity.

Cultural conservation in Egypt, and in Arab and/or Muslim societies is related to nationalist movements, just as it is in western societies. To some extent, a society identity is based on its culture (Coccossis, H., & Kijkamps, P.,1995). The crucial question that should be raised is whether former cultural values still have a meaning and validity nowadays. We must admit that only hypothetical thoughts that lie behind physical forms are desirable, such as the religious values, privacy, etc. The past is not important in itself. It is the presence of the past and our attitude towards that matter (Bousaa, J.,1999). A number of points are worth mentioning here:

- Not everything in our past is worth reintegration into present-day society. Only the cultural values that are significant and have a constructive function for society should be considered.
- Cultural heritage should be fostered in a creative way by extracting, and analyzing lessons to be adapted to present.
- New development in the social and technological field has its merits and contributions to the quality of the present-day life. Soulless copies of the past exclude any social vitality.
- The demolition of traditional concepts and figures wipes out a significant chapter of the history of a place. Even if it does not erase them from the local memory, it tends to eliminate the recall of that memory, rendering less meaningful communication of that heritage to a new generation. (Lowenthal, D.,1994)
- Visible tangible past may tend to culture, but current trend tends to make economic profit from it as well. All cultural assets represent an economic value, which can be integrated in any planning development process.

3.3. *Environmental Consumer*

The key element of environmental conscious consumption is a desire by consumers for more information about the relationship between products and the environment, with greater exposure to “Green” information sources influencing consumer purchasing decisions (Peattie K.,1995).

The growth of environmentally conscious consumers has created a trend in the market called “environmental consumerism” (Carlson, Grove, and Kangun, 1993). Gussow (1989) explained environmental consumerism as an orientation in which consumers’ purchases, product usage and disposal decisions are driven by a desire to preserve nature’s ecological balance.

Egyptians designers set certain thought on environmental ads, which are demonstrated in modelss shown in Figure 3 as follows:



Fig.3Environmental Advertising in Egypt

4. Results and Conclusion

The research found a set of results:

1- New trends in environmental design links the scientific aspects and practical aspects of theory and practice of capacity development, in addition to personal skills of the advertising designer through the relationship between environmental message ,environmental culture and environmental consumer, which lead to the development of environmental advertising field in Egypt society.

2- The process of integrating information with the international advertising trends "Greenadvertising, think sustainable, and greenwashing advertising" would lead to create aesthetic designs that can be applied in improving the environmental advertising in Egypt.

Due to the previous results, the researcher b adopts he vision of how to take advantage of global trends in the development of environmental advertising design in Egypt, as shown in Figure 4.

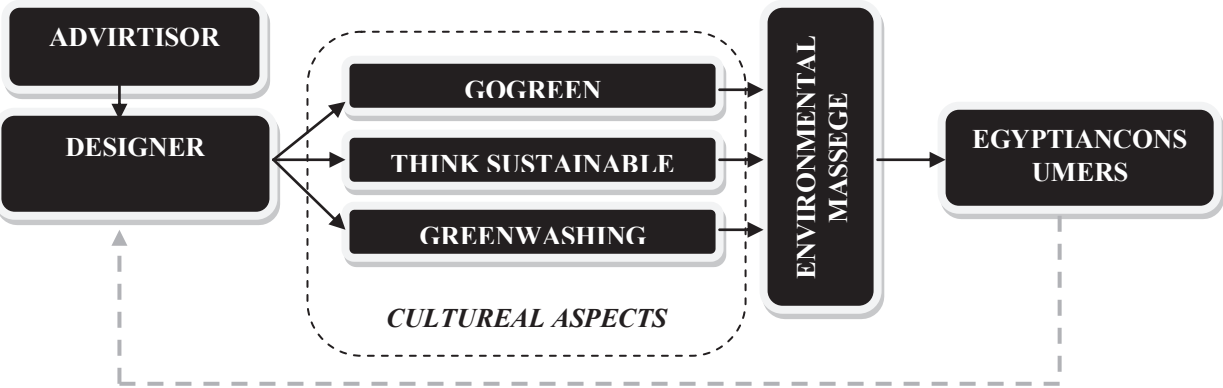


Fig. 4 Environmental Advertising Design in Egypt

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